

GUIDELINES FOR CAREGIVERS

TIPS ON HANDLING DISASTER RELATED STRESS

FOR THE OLDER PERSON:

- encourage them to talk about their feelings
- help them realize that their reactions and feelings are normal
- help them to celebrate their survival by participating in community ceremonies for anniversary dates
- re-establish support networks (friends, other family, church)
- re-establish an emotionally supportive environment (use hugs, touching, laughter)
- renew meaningful rituals
- maintain or re-establish familiar routines
- re-establish medication regimen, if applicable
- ensure proper diet, rest, and exercise
- share fun activities
- be tolerant and patient
- help them to reconnect to the past through memories rather than things
- reassure them

FOR THE CAREGIVER:

- take care of your health - diet, exercise, rest
- take regular breaks from your caregiving responsibilities
- take time for yourself - read, go to a movie, get a massage, visit a special friend - schedule a regular time for this
- set manageable goals; remember that not all things are of equal importance
- ask for help from others as needed and then accept it
- recognize your own feelings and begin to work through them
- consider attending a caregiver support group
- try to remember that the person you're caring for is also under stress as well as other family members
- be flexible
- remember that there is outside help available to help you
- Call your local Council or Department on Aging for further information. (mention "Floyd" Relief)